

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
EASTERN DISTRICT OF TENNESSEE  
AT KNOXVILLE

JAMES DAVID DUNCAN,

Plaintiff,

v.

3:12-cv-145

HENRY DANIEL FORRESTER III,

Defendant.

**MEMORANDUM AND ORDER**

The court is in receipt of a *pro se* prisoner's civil rights complaint under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 and an application to proceed *in forma pauperis*. It appears from the application that the plaintiff lacks sufficient financial resources to pay the \$350.00 filing fee. Accordingly, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(4), the Clerk is **DIRECTED** to file this action without the prepayment of costs or fees or security therefor as of the date the complaint was received. However, for the reasons stated below, process shall not issue and this action is **DISMISSED**.

Plaintiff is an inmate in the Anderson County Detention Facility. The defendant, Henry Daniel Forrester III, is an attorney. Plaintiff alleges that the defendant was appointed to represent him in the Circuit Court of Anderson County, Tennessee, and subsequently moved to withdraw. The reason the defendant gave for withdrawing was that he had a

conflict of interest because he represented a co-defendant of plaintiff's. Plaintiff claims there was no conflict of interest at that time, but that a potential co-defendant retained the defendant after the defendant had been appointed to represent plaintiff. Plaintiff alleges the defendant withdrew because plaintiff was not a paying client and also because plaintiff is African-American. Plaintiff seeks compensation for discrimination in violation of his civil rights.

In order to state a claim under 42 U.S.C. § 1983, plaintiff must establish that he was deprived of a federal right by a person acting under color of state law. *Black v. Barberton Citizens Hospital*, 134 F.3d 1265, 1267 (6th Cir. 1998); *O'Brien v. City of Grand Rapids*, 23 F.3d 990, 995 (6th Cir. 1994); *Russo v. City of Cincinnati*, 953 F.2d 1036, 1042 (6th Cir. 1992). The courts have uniformly held that neither a public defender nor a private attorney, whether appointed or retained, acts under color of law or is otherwise subject to suit under 42 U.S.C. § 1983. *See, e.g., Polk County v. Dodson*, 454 U.S. 312, 325 (1981); *Mulligan v. Schlachter*, 389 F.2d 231, 233 (6th Cir. 1968).

Although this court is mindful that a *pro se* complaint is to be liberally construed, *Haines v. Kerner*, 404 U.S. 519, 520-21 (1972), it is quite clear that the plaintiff has not alleged the deprivation of any constitutionally protected right, privilege or immunity, and, therefore, the court finds his claims to be frivolous under 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915(e) and 1915A. It appears beyond doubt that plaintiff can prove no set of facts which would entitle him to relief, *Malone v. Colyer*, 710 F.2d 258 (6th Cir. 1983), and that plaintiff's claim lacks an arguable basis in law and fact, *Neitzke v. Williams*, 490 U.S. 319, 325 (1989). Therefore, this

action is **DISMISSED** *sua sponte*, as frivolous and for failure to state a claim upon which relief can be granted under § 1983. The court **CERTIFIES** that any appeal from this action would not be taken in good faith and would be totally frivolous. *See* Rule 24 of the Federal Rules of Appellate Procedure.

Because the plaintiff is an inmate in the Anderson County Detention Facility, he is herewith **ASSESSED** the civil filing fee of \$350.00. Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(1)(A) and (B), the custodian of the plaintiff's inmate trust account at the institution where he now resides is directed to submit to the Clerk, U.S. District Court, 800 Market Street, Suite 130, Knoxville, Tennessee 37902, as an initial partial payment, whichever is greater of:

(a) twenty percent (20%) of the average monthly deposits to the plaintiff's inmate trust account; *or*

(b) twenty percent (20%) of the average monthly balance in the plaintiff's inmate trust account for the six-month period preceding the filing of the complaint.

Thereafter, the custodian shall submit twenty percent (20%) of the plaintiff's preceding monthly income (or income credited to the plaintiff's trust account for the preceding month), but only when such monthly income exceeds ten dollars (\$10.00), until the full filing fee of three hundred fifty dollars (\$350.00) as authorized under 28 U.S.C. § 1914(a) has been paid to the Clerk. 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(2).

The Clerk is **DIRECTED** to send a copy of this Memorandum and Order to the Sheriff of Anderson County, Tennessee, and the county attorney for Anderson County, Tennessee, to ensure that the custodian of the plaintiff's inmate trust account complies with

that portion of the Prison Litigation Reform Act relating to payment of the filing fee. The Clerk is further **DIRECTED** to forward a copy of this Memorandum and Order to the court's financial deputy.

**ENTER:**

s/ Thomas W. Phillips  
United States District Judge